Forms to print and fill out by hand are also available online (www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/forms.htm). Form AD-1 is for predictive samples and AD-2 for diagnostic samples. During peak season, please use online submission instead. Never include checks or cash with samples.

Give each sample a unique identifier of up to five letters and/or numbers. Put this identifier on the sample box as well as the information form. Choose an identifier that will help you remember the area represented by the sample, such as FYARD, BYARD, ROSES or GRASS.

Be sure to list the existing plants and/or the plants you are planning to grow. You must include crop code(s) in order to receive lime and fertilizer recommendations. Use only the codes designated for homeowners that are listed on the back of the sample information form. Code 024 applies to all vegetable garden crops and 026 to all lawn grasses except centipedegrass (022).

To receive email notification that your report is ready, provide a valid email address.

■ **Package samples appropriately.** Put the soil mixture in the sample box. ***Do not*** put soil in a plastic bag. ***Do not*** use tape to seal a sample box. If you send several samples through the mail, pack them carefully in a sturdy container that will protect the boxes. ***Do not*** use manila envelopes.

Obtaining your report

Completed reports are posted online. Visit www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/ and select **Find Your Report (PALS)** from the left-column navigation bar to access the search utility.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture

Agronomic Division
Colleen M. Hudak-Wise, Ph.D., Director

Soil Testing Section
David H. Hardy, Ph.D., Agronomist

www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/

(919) 733-2655

Mailing Address
1040 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC 27699-1040

Physical Address [DHL, FedEx, UPS]
4300 Reedy Creek Road
Raleigh NC 27607-6465

For more information on sampling, interpreting agronomic reports or implementing recommendations, contact the regional agronomist assigned to your county.

www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/rahome.htm

Agronomic Sampling
Folder No. 1

revised April 2014

Soil Sampling Home Lawns & Gardens

The Agronomic Division analyzes soil for its nutrient content and for properties that affect plant growth. Soil testing

- provides optimal, cost-effective lime and fertilizer recommendations,
- diagnoses common nutrient deficiencies or toxicities and
- promotes environmental quality.

When gardeners follow recommended guidelines for fertilization, nutrient runoff into surface or ground water is minimized, money is saved and natural resources are conserved.

Taking a good sample

Sample collection is the critical first step in soil testing. The sample must represent the area, or results will have little or no value.

A soil sample must be taken at the right time and in the right way. The tools used, the area sampled, the depth and uniformity of the sample, the information provided and packaging all influence sample quality.

■ **Time it right.** Collect soil samples several months before initiating any new landscaping—laying sod, starting a vegetable garden, putting in a flower bed or planting perennials. Submit samples to the lab from April through mid-November to obtain a report within one to two weeks and to avoid paying a peak-season fee. If the soil report recommends lime, apply it as soon as possible so it has sufficient time to adjust soil pH before planting.